

# How to use crutches after your foot operation

## Podiatric Surgery

Information for Patients

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### Why have I been given crutches?

You have been given crutches because you have asked for them or the podiatric surgery team feel that you should use them. This is because you may be unsteady on your feet after your surgery or have had a number of operations.

Crutches should also be used if you have had an anaesthetic injection into the back of your leg (popliteal block). This type of anaesthetic makes your muscles less strong for a short period of time.

The podiatric surgery team will let you know how long you need to use crutches. This is between 2 and 8 weeks after your surgery. This depends on the type of surgery you had.

### Fitting the crutches to your height

It is important that the crutches are the correct height for you. We will fit the crutches so that they are the right height for you. But we will also show you how to adjust them if you feel that the fit is not right:

- Stand upright, with your shoulders relaxed and your arms hanging loosely at your sides.
- The height of the handgrips should be at the crease of your wrist when your arm is straight.
- Your elbow should be bent around 30° when you hold the handgrips.
- The arm cuff should be 1 to 2 inches (3 to 5 cms) below the bend of the elbow.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

**Making changes to the leg length and arm cuff with the spring pin alteration**

1. Press the 2 pins in.
2. Push the leg to shorten.
3. Turn the leg slightly.
4. Stretch out the leg to the height you prefer, turn and put the pins into the right holes.
5. Check pins are fully locked in place before use.
6. Make sure that both crutches are at the same height.

**Standing, sitting down and walking**

Use a chair with a high seat and arms to help you sit and stand up.

**To stand up:**

1. Sit at the front of the chair. Keep the operated foot in front of you and both crutches in one hand making an "H".
2. Hold both crutches in the hand on your good leg side.
3. Using the arm of the chair and the crutches, push yourself up and stand onto the good leg and heel of operated foot.
4. When standing, take one crutch in each hand and place your arms inside the cuffs of the crutches.

**To sit down:**

1. Back up to a sturdy chair.
2. Remove both arms from the crutches and place them both into one hand on your good leg side, making an 'H' shape.
3. Put your operated foot in front of you and use that hand to feel for the seat or arm rest of your chair.
4. Slowly lower yourself down into the chair.

**To walk:**

1. You can walk on the heel of the foot that has been operated on.
2. Move the crutches one pace ( arms length) forward.
3. Place the heel of the operated foot onto the ground, just behind the level of the crutches.
4. Using the crutches and heel to support your body weigh, bring your good foot forward and place it onto the ground.

## Stairs

We recommend that **you do not use stairs** when you cannot put your foot flat on the ground. This is also while you are using crutches.

## General safety

- Make your area safe: remove loose rugs or objects on the floor which may trip you up.
- Make sure there is enough light to see where you are going.
- Wear a flat supportive shoe on the good foot (non-operated foot).
- Avoid wet floors or icy paths.
- Take care when walking with the crutches on laminate flooring or smooth surfaces as these can be slippery.
- Check all parts of the crutches regularly for damage and wear. Let us know if you find any issues.
- Be careful outdoors uneven surfaces, wet leaves and ice can make you slip or trip.
- Clean the crutches regularly with mild disinfectant.
- Do not store the crutches in temperatures below 0 degrees as this can damage them.

If you weigh over **160kg** or **25 stone**, **crutches are not suitable for you.**

## Where do I return the crutches to?

Please give the crutches to the day surgery unit where you had your surgery or give them back at your next appointment.



## Contact Details:

If you have any questions or concerns please get in contact with the podiatric surgery team (Mon to Fri, 8:30am to 4:30pm).

**Rutland Memorial Hospital:** Main reception: 01572 772000 (option 8 for outpatient appointments)

**Melton Mowbray Hospital:** Main reception: 01664 854800  
Day surgery unit: 01664 854904  
Outpatients: 01664 800154

**Loughborough Hospital:** Main reception: 01509 611600  
Day surgery unit: 01509 564406  
Outpatients: 01509 564355

**Hinckley & District Hospital:** Main reception: 01455 441800  
Outpatient appointments: 01455 441918

**Market Harborough Hospital:** (St Luke's Treatment Centre): Main reception: 01858 410500  
Outpatient appointments: 01858 438135

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

Previous reference:

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